

Rural Utilities Service, USDA

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(Grant Program) is to enable public television stations serving rural areas to transition from broadcasting in analog to digital, as required under the Federal Communications Commission rules, by awarding grants through a competitive process.

§ 1740.2 Definitions.

Core coverage area is the set of counties fully covered, or at least 75% covered, by a digital television transmitter or translator.

Coverage contour area is the area estimated to receive a digital television signal from a transmitter or translator of 41 dBμ for UHF signals, 36 dBμ for channel 7-13 signals, or 28 dBμ for channel 2-6 signals, as shown on the public television station's map filed with the FCC.

Digital television, or DTV, means the digital television system which will replace the current analog system.

Digital transition means the transition from analog television broadcasting to digital television broadcasting. To transition according to FCC rules, a broadcaster must initiate digital television broadcasting while continuing to operate analog television broadcasting until December 31, 2006, to enable viewers the necessary time to acquire digital television reception capability.

Distance learning means any digital public television broadcast to a school, library, home, or other end-user site located in a rural area, for the purpose of providing educational and cultural programming.

Grant Program means this Public Television Station Digital Transition Grant Program.

High definition television, or HDTV, means an enhanced television service which is authorized by the FCC as part of the digital television standard.

Public television station means a non-commercial educational television broadcast station that serves rural areas and is qualified for Community Service Grants by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting under section 396(k) of the Communications Act of 1934.

Rural area means any area of the United States not included within the boundaries of any incorporated or un-

incorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants.

Rural population means the number of people within the core coverage area of a transmitter who do not live within the boundaries of an incorporated or unincorporated city, village, or borough having a population in excess of 20,000 inhabitants as calculated pursuant to Section 1740.8(c)(1).

Rural Utilities Service, or RUS, is a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, which will administer this Grant Program.

Urban area means any area of the United States which is not a *Rural area*.

§ 1740.3 Applicant eligibility.

Eligibility for grants is limited to public television stations that serve rural areas, regardless of whether urban areas are additionally served.

§ 1740.4 Maximum amounts of grants.

The maximum grant amount shall be announced in each fiscal year's Notice of Funds Availability.

§ 1740.5 Matching funds.

No matching funds are required in this program.

§ 1740.6 Eligible purposes of grants.

Grants shall be made to enable applicants to perform digital transitions of television broadcasting serving rural areas, regardless of the location of their main transmitter. Grant funds may be used to acquire, lease, and/or install facilities and software necessary to the digital transition. Specific purposes include:

(a) Digital transmitters, translators, and repeaters, including all facilities required to initiate DTV broadcasting. All broadcast facilities acquired with grant funds shall be capable of delivering DTV programming and HDTV programming, at both the interim and final channel and power authorizations. There is no limit to the number of transmitters or translators that may be included in an application;

(b) Power upgrades of existing DTV transmitter equipment;

(c) Studio-to-transmitter links;

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(d) Equipment to allow local control over digital content and programming, including master control equipment;

(e) Digital program production equipment, including cameras, editing, mixing and storage equipment;

(f) Multicasting and datacasting equipment;

(g) Cost of the lease of facilities, if any, for up to three years; and

(h) Associated engineering and environmental studies necessary to implementation.

§ 1740.7 Ineligible purposes.

(a) Grant funds shall not be used to fund ongoing operations or for facilities that will not be owned by the applicant, except for leased facilities as provided in § 1740.6.

(b) Costs of salaries, wages, and employee benefits of public television station personnel are not eligible for funding under this program unless they are for construction or installation of eligible facilities.

(c) Facilities for which other grant funding from any source has been approved are not eligible for funding under this program.

(d) Expenditures made prior to this deadline are not eligible for funding. To be an eligible grant purpose, an expenditure must be made after the application deadline specified in the Notice of Funds Available.

§ 1740.8 Scoring criteria for the grant competition.

(a) After an application is found to be eligible, it will be scored in three categories: the rurality of the applicant's core coverage area, the average National School Lunch Program eligibility ratio in the applicant's core coverage area, and the critical need for the project.

(b)(1)(i) Scoring in this program is based on a simplified representation of the project's digital coverage area. To find a transmitter's simplified coverage area, go to the FCC TV Query Web site (<http://www.fcc.gov/fcc-bin/audio/tvq.html>) and access the station Service Contour Map. This map shows coverage at the appropriate field strength in dBμ, overlaid on a Census Tiger Map. The map also shows counties covered. The core coverage area is

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the set of counties that are either entirely within the appropriate coverage contour, or are at least seventy-five percent (75%) within the contour. For contours where counties are very large with respect to coverage, as might be the case for some western states and for most translators, there may be only one county within the coverage contour. In such cases, this county is the station's core coverage area. Every transmitter and translator must have a core coverage area consisting of one or more counties.

(ii) In the case of translators, where a coverage contour area does not exist, the applicant shall define a coverage contour area and explain how coverage was estimated. This estimated coverage contour area is subject to acceptance by RUS.

(2) When an application covers more than one transmitter or translator, the core coverage area of the application is the sum of the core coverage areas of all transmitters and translators included in the application.

(c) Rurality is a measure of the degree to which a project benefits rural areas. Up to fifty (50) points are available in this category. Urban areas bisected by the computed contour line are disregarded, since they represent fringe viewers. The Rurality score is computed as follows:

(1) The rural population of a core coverage area must be calculated. The rural population of a county is calculated by subtracting the county's urban population(s) from the total county population. If the core coverage area consists of multiple counties, the rural population is the sum of all included counties' rural populations. Urban area and county populations may be found at the American Factfinder Web site http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

(2) The Rurality score is computed by multiplying the rural population for the core coverage area by one hundred (100), and subtracting fifty (50) from it. If this calculation results in a negative number, the Rurality score is zero. The formula is:

$$100 \times [(\text{total population} - \text{urban population}) / \text{total population}] - 50$$